

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7052

CONFIDENTIAL CARACAS 12593

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR OCON VE US

SUBJECT: ATTITUDE OF MIND OF VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT TOWARD THE
UNITED STATES: ADVISABILITY OF HIGH LEVEL U.S.-
VENEZUELAN PARTICIPATION AT FLETCHER SCHOOL SYMPOSIUM
LATE JANUARY

1. MRS. MCCLINTOCK AND I GAVE A LUNCHEON TODAY IN HONOR OF FORMER PRESIDENT ROMULO BETANCOURT AND HIS WIFE, WHICH WAS ATTENDED BY THE SENIOR LEADERS OF THE ADECO PARTY. BETANCOURT WENT OUT OF HIS WAY ON ARRIVAL TO SAY THAT HE HAD TALKED YESTERDAY WITH PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ, WHO MADE VERY NICE SOUNDS ABOUT ME. BETANCOURT ALSO GATHERED THE IMPRESSION THAT THE ADECO LEADERSHIP, DESPITE NATIONALISTIC REACTION TO OUR TRADE BILL, AS PROPHESIED FINAL SENTENCE CARACAS 12534, IS EAGER TO IMPROVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE UNITED STATES.

2. RE UPCOMING FLETCHER SCHOOL SYMPOSIUM ON U.S.-VENEZUELAN RELATIONS, WHICH IS FINANCED BY THE NORTH AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF VENEZUELA AND THE U.S.-OWNED AMERICAN-VENEZUELAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (CARACAS 12560), ROMULO BETANCOURT SAID HE WOULD GLADLY ACCEPT AN INVITATION TO BE THE PRINCIPAL VENEZUELAN SPEAKER ON CONDITION THAT HIS OLD FRIEND NELSON ROCKEFELLER WOULD BE HIS OPPOSITE NUMBER IN BEING THE PRINCIPAL AMERICAN SPEAKER.

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3. IN CONSEQUENCE, IAM DISAPPOINTED IN RECEIVING TODAY A

LETTER FROM VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER DATED DECEMBER 12
IN RESPONSE TO MY OWN LETTER TO HIM OF DECEMBER 3 INDICATING
THAT NOTHING IS POSSIBLE FOR HIM TO TAKE ON EXTRA ENGAGEMENTS
FOR JANUARY.

4. I DO FEEL THAT IN VIEW OF THE PRESENT ATTITUDE OF MIND OF
THE VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT AND THE WILLINGNESS OF HIS DISTINGUISHED
MENTOR AND PREDECESSOR, ROMULO BETANCOURT, TO PARTICIPATE
IN THE FLETCHER SCHOOL SYMPOSIUM. MUCH BENEFIT WOULD ACCRUE
TO THE UNITED STATES IF THE VICE PRESIDENT COULD AT LEAST
APPEAR ON THE FINAL DAY FOR A LUNCHEON MEETING AT THE
COPLEY PLAZA HOTEL AND MAKE A SPEECH WHICH EITHER WOULD
RESPOND TO OR PRECEDE A SIMILAR SPEECH BY THE FORMER
PRESIDENT OF VENEZUELA.

5. IN THIS CONNECTION, WE SHOULD KEEP IN MIND THAT THE
PRESENT PRESIDENT OF VENEZUELA IS RIDING HIGH AND THAT THE
DIRECTION HE TAKES THROUGHOUT LATIN AMERICA MAY BE COPIED
BY OTHER AMERICAN REPUBLICS. IT IS MY CONSIDERED OPINION
THAT WE HAVE A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO SAY SOMETHING USEFUL
ABOUT LATIN AMERICA IN ADDITION TO ONLY VENEZUELAN-U.S.
RELATIONS AND THEREFORE I PRESUME UPON MY LONGSTANDING FRIENDSHIP
WITH THE VICE PRESIDENT TO ENTREAT THAT HE RECONSIDER HIS
DECISION OF DECEMBER 12 AND HONOR THE SYMPOSIUM WITH
HIS PRESENCE AT LEAST FOR A FEW HOURS.

6. BETANCOURT TOLD ME THAT HE WOULD COME TO THE FLETCHER
SYMPOSIUM IF ROCKEFELLER ACCEPTED; OTHERWISE HE WOULD NOT.
IT IS MY HOPE THAT BOTH OF THESE OLD FRIENDS CAN GET TOGETHER
FOR A FEW HOURS TO THE BENEFIT OF BOTH COUNTRIES.

7. DEPARTMENT PASS TO THE VICE PRESIDENT ON A PERSONAL BASIS
FROM AMBASSADOR.
MCCLINTOCK

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